

College of Education News

October 9, 2018

College of Education, Georgia Southern University

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College of Education alum receives national recognition for administration role

October 9, 2018



Jeff Kelly (pictured center) was recognized as NAESP Outstanding Middle Level Assistant Principal of the Year.

College of Education alumnus Jeff Kelly, Ed.D. ('96), who earned a bachelor's in middle grades education from Georgia Southern University, was named a 2018 National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) Outstanding Middle Level Assistant Principal of the Year.

Recognizing the significant role assistant principals play in the overall academic achievement of students, the NAESP recognition program honors one assistant principal (PreK-8) from each state annually and highlights his or her efforts for student achievement and

educational excellence. Kelly was recognized for his efforts as assistant principal at Upson-Lee Middle School (ULMS) in Thomaston, Georgia, where he administered and assisted in the creation of the school's Response to Intervention (RTI) program, which is now used as a model district-wide.

"The foundation of this program is building positive relationships with our students," Kelly said. "It's about focusing on an individual student and with the student's help, developing strategies to help the student."

The RTI program focuses on the development of the "whole child and not one specific area," he explained.

Kelly served as a math, science and Georgia history teacher at ULMS before transitioning to become an instructional coach and later an assistant principal at East Coweta Middle School. He returned to ULMS in 2015. Recently, Kelly accepted a position as the director of federal program and assessment for the Thomaston-Upson School District.

"Every day is a different, challenging day, and that is what I enjoy the most about administration," Kelly said. "The family environment within a small, rural school is what I love."

Kelly explained that he choose to enter the administrative side of his educational career to build relationships with students, teachers, staff, parents and outside stakeholders. Becoming an assistant principal allowed him to do what he wanted the most — to be able to help the school community even more.

"I have worked under excellent principals who provided me with growth opportunities," said Kelly. "I had teachers, instructional coaches and special education staff who gave me open and honest feedback that pushed me to become a better leader. NAESP is a great organization that is full of resources at your fingertips. I am glad to be a member of such a great group of leaders and humbled to be selected for this award in honor of my school district, employees and students."

Kelly is also grateful to be an Eagle Educator.

“As I reflected back on the powerful impact my former teachers instilled in me, I knew at that very moment, I wanted to impact the lives of children,” Kelly said. “I chose Georgia Southern for my teaching degree because of its solid teacher-training reputation. The University has a small town feel while offering a quality educational teaching program. When I tell people I went to Georgia Southern University, there is a sense of respect for my educational past.”

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STEMFest returns with a bang, slime and even an alpaca

October 9, 2018



Bottle rockets activity hosted by National Organization of Black Chemists and Chemical Engineers

support the region through educational endeavors,” said Cynthia Bolton, Ph.D., associate dean for outreach, partnerships and diversity for the College of Education. “It is important to offer STEM education to our community so we can inspire and engage kids and their families that STEM can be fun, active and compelling. There is something for everyone in STEM from the sciences to the arts, criminal justice and history.”

With over 50 interactive stations for students to learn and engage, activities included Alka-Seltzer pop rockets, electromagnetic trains, liquid nitrogen ice cream, kinetic sand, and slime time. This year’s event also featured live animals including alpacas as well as birds and reptiles from the University’s Center for Wildlife Education. Bolton says it takes “teamwork and commitment” to offer an event of this size and caliber at no cost to the public.

“STEMFest included volunteers and expert faculty, students and staff from all parts of Georgia Southern University,” she said. “We had over 300 volunteers assisting the organization team from i²STEM^e. It also takes contributions from sponsors to help fund this event including supplies and lunches for the volunteers.”

Patrons of this year’s event can count on seeing STEMFest back again next year. i²STEM^e plans to host the event again in September 2019. [Follow i²STEM^e on Facebook for the latest updates.](#)

“STEMFest is just one amazing, fun-filled and family-oriented event that can immerse and educate students about STEM opportunities,” Bolton said.

Volunteers represented a multitude of University colleges, departments and organizations including: Department of Sociology and Anthropology; Betty Foy Sanders Department of Art; Department of Elementary and Special Education; Department of Middle Grades and Secondary Education; Department of Biology; Center for Applied Cyber Education; Department of Civil Engineering and Construction; Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering; Fashion Merchandising and Apparel Design Program; Department of Criminal Justice and Criminology; Department of Geology and Geography; School of Human Ecology; Department of Mechanical Engineering; Department of Manufacturing Engineering; Georgia

The STEM Festival event returned to Georgia Southern University this year as STEMFest 2018. From 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the Nessmith-Lane Conference Center on the Statesboro Campus, community members filled the hallways and ballroom to experience hands-on science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education activities.

Free and open to the public, this event hosted over 800 area PreK-12 students, not including guardians, faculty, staff and volunteers in attendance.

The event was unable to be hosted last fall, but the College of Education’s Institute for Interdisciplinary STEM Education (i²STEM^e) knew it was crucial to bring it back this year.

“As the largest regional institution south of the Atlanta area, it is a vital part of our mission to



Liquid nitrogen ice cream hosted by Student Affiliates of the American Chemical Society

Southern University Museum; Nutrition and Food Science Association; James H. Oliver, Jr. Institute for Coastal Plain Science; National Organization of Black Chemists and Chemical Engineers; Center for Sustainability; Department of Physics and Astronomy; Department of Psychology; Student Affiliates of the American Chemical Society; University Housing; Sustainable Aquaponics Research Center; Sigma Xi, Georgia Southern Chapter; Society of Manufacturing Engineering; and Center for Wildlife Education and the Lamar Q. Ball, Jr. Raptor Center.



Feeding the alpacas

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